

Message Text

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FOR IOP/M

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: CURRENT MEDIA REACTION

IN EDITORIALS CONCERNED PRINCIPALLY WITH THE FALL OF DA NANG AND
THE REFUGEE PROBLEMS, TWO DAILIES COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS:

THE BULLETIN (CONSERVATIVE) OF MARCH 31 UNDER HEADING "AFTER
DA NANY" COMMENTS:

"AFTER DA NANG WHAT? THE FALL OF THE OLD IMPERIAL CITY OF HUE WAS
A PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOW THAT MUST HAVE HIT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOOD
AND PROPER - WHAT WAS UNEXPECTED WAS THE EASE WITH WHICH THE
COMMUNISTS CUT THROUGH THE DEFENCES OF THE MOST FORMIDABLE BASE
IN SOUTH VIETNAM....

....IF ANYTHING THIS DOES NOT MINIMIZE THE EFFECT OF THE VICTORY
RECORDED BY THE COMMUNISTS, BUT IT POINTS AN ACCUSING FINGER AT
THOSE WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PEACE ACCORD IN JANUARY 1973.
IT WAS STATED AT THE TIME IT WAS A BAD ACCORD - TIME HAS
MERELY CONFIRMED IT.

THE MORALE OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TROOPS COULD NOT BE HIGH; BUT
DA NANG REPRESENTS THE GREEATEST LOSS IN INDO-CHINA SINCE THE DIEN
BIEN PHU DISASTER - EXCEPT THAT THE LATTER STOOD OUT AS HOW
SOLDIERS SHOULD BE LED AND FIGHT....

....A BLOW AT U.S. CREDIBILITY? YES. A SHATTERING DEFEAT FOR
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SOUTH VIETNAM? YES. PRESIDENT THIEU WILL HAVE TO PICK UP THE

PICES, IF SAIGON IS TO CLAIM TO ANY RIGHT TO EXIST."

TIMES OF MALTA (CONSERVATIVE) OF APRIL 1, UNDER HEADING "VIETNAM REFUGEES". COMMENTS:

"THE PLIGHT OF OVER ONE AND A HALF MILLION DESTITUTE AND DESPERATE REFUGEES IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA HAS SHIFTED THE FOCUS FROM THE BITTERNESS OF A PROLONGED WAR TO WHAT U.S. PRESIDENT GERALD FORD HAS APTLY DESCRIBED AS 'AN IMMENSE HUMAN TRAGEDY'. THE VIET CONG, FLUSHED WITH VICTORY AFTER CAPTURING DA ANANG, CONTINUE TO PRESS FORWARD AND SOUTH VIETNAM SHRINKS AND PREPARES FOR THE FINAL BATTLE AROUND SAIGON, THE CAPITAL.

IN NEARBY CAMBODIA, PRESIDENT LON NOL LEAVES THE COUNTRY TODAY, OSTENSIBLY FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT IN HAWAII. HE AND THE SEVEN OTHER LEDERS WHOM THE KHMER ROUGE, 5#3 :- .79\$8-, ;34 89, 9* 5#3 ;835 :9,&, HAD LISTED AS 'TRAITORS', ARE NOT EXPECTED TO RETURN. THEIR PEOPLE, WHO SO VALIANTLY FOUGHT TO PREVENT A COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER, HVE LITTLE OPTION BUT TO SUE FOR PEACE.

THE REST OF THE WORLD SHUDDERS AS IT TRIES TO VISUALIZE THE FATE OF THE PEOPLE LEFT BEHIND IN BOTH COUNTRIES. IN SOUTH VIETNAM, THE REFUGEES HAVE ALREADY BECOME THE PAWNS IN A BATTLE OF WORDS BETWEEN NOTH AND SOUTH. THE VIET CONG, ANXIOUS TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY HAD BEEN WELCOMED AS 'LIBERATORS', WANT THEM TO STAY WHERE THEY ARE. THE AMERICANS AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE TOGETHER WITH OTHER NATIONS, HAVE SENT IN SHIPS TO TRY TO EVACUATE THEM - HELP WHICH HAD ARRIVED TOO LATE.

THE TERROR AND PANIC THAT HAVE GRIPPED THESE PEOPLE IS BASED ON FACT. THEY KNOW THEY ARE UNABLE TO ESCAPE THE FATE THAT BEFELL THOUSANDS OF OTHERS IN AREAS CAPTURED BY THE COMMUNISTS WHERE ATROCITIES WERE FREQUENT AND ON A LARGE SCALE. THEIRS IS INDEED AN APPALLING HUMAN TRAGEDY". BIRN

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